

Testimony
on the
DC Office on Aging
FY 2002 and 2003 Budgets
for the
Oversight Hearing

before the
District of Columbia City Council
Committee On Human Services

The Honorable Sandra Allen, Chairman

Presented by
E. Veronica Pace, Executive Director

in the Council Chambers
Monday, February 24, 2003
9:00 AM

Good morning Chairperson Allen and members of the Committee on Human Services. My name is E. Veronica Pace. I am Executive Director of the DC Office on Aging.

With me today at the table are Mr. Sam Gawad, Compliance and Administration Manager, and Mrs. Alethea Campbell, Chairperson of the DC Commission on Aging. I am pleased to testify before the committee today on the performance of the Office on Aging in FY 2002 and in FY 2003.

The office did, and continues to carry out its mission as defined in the District of Columbia Aging Act (DC Law 1-24). The mission of the office is to advocate, plan, implement, and monitor programs in health, education, employment, and social services that promote longevity, independence, dignity, and choice for our seniors.

The office is charged with the responsibility of assuring that a full range of services is available to the approximately 90,000 Washingtonians who are 60 years of age and older. The office performs advocacy, leadership, management, program, and fiscal tasks and has two on-site

programs: the Information and Assistance Center and the Senior Employment and Training Program.

In addition, the office oversees the operation of a 262-bed nursing facility, and funds and coordinates the provision of services to our seniors through a Senior Service Network comprised of 25 community-based nonprofit organizations that provide direct services to the District's seniors throughout the eight Wards of the District.

In Fiscal Year 2002, the Office on Aging's total budget was \$19,915,000.00 (\$14,687,000.00 local, \$4,962,000.00 federal, and \$266,000.00 intra-District). The office expended more than 90% of its total budget on direct services provided in partnership with the Senior Service Network.

The Office on Aging is proud of what it accomplished in Fiscal Year 2002, touching nearly 50% of the District's elderly population by providing one or more services. In FY 2002, the Office on Aging had many accomplishments such as:

- Provided over 1.3 million nutritious mid-day meals to nearly ten thousand elderly Washingtonians in group settings and homebound.
- Placed over 772 District seniors in subsidized employment and training through the Senior Works Program, the Older Workers Employment and Training Program, McMaster's Program and the Senior Service Network.
- Served 343 residents at the Washington Center for Aging Services (WCAS), the Office on Aging nursing facility.
- Initiated a multi-year refurbishing of the WCAS based on input from the residents, their families and staff.
- Continued renovation of two group homes and a community residence facility for elderly Washingtonians on the grounds of the Washington Center for Aging Services.
- Conducted two town meetings with the Asian and Hispanic communities.

- Translated and printed the Office on Aging's mission and services provided into Mandarin, Cantonese, and Spanish for distribution at town meetings and other events. Additionally, translators and signers were present at the town meetings.

The Office on Aging and its Seniors Service Network partners ensured services that maintain health such as:

- 2,345 District seniors took 115,201 one-way trips to medical and other life-supporting appointments and services.
- 2,617 District seniors received 31,689 hours of Professional geriatric assessment and case management services.
- 6,746 District seniors participated in health promotion, self-care, and wellness activities.
- 1,212 District seniors were provided individual expert nutrition counseling.
- 2,264 District seniors received practical lessons in nutrition education.

- 4,218 homebound Washingtonians received 556,067 life-sustaining, home delivered meals.
- 368 seniors used Call ‘N’ Ride taxicab vouchers.
- 756 District caregivers were provided with respite and other services to ease their caregiving burdens through the caregivers support program.

Our services which addressed functional limitations were:

- 335 seniors received 141,004 hours of geriatric adult day care services.
- 42 seniors received 644 hours of heavy house-cleaning.
- 644 seniors received 109,950 hours of homemaker and al-care services.

We also provided the following services that support related goals and outcomes:

- 5,541 seniors participated in socialization activities.
- 114 persons received services from the Oasis Senior Center for the Homeless Elderly.
- 1,700 seniors participated in the Bodywise water aerobics program.
The Bodywise program is a city-wide health and fitness program, co-sponsored by the University of the District of Columbia's Institute of Gerontology and the Department of Health.
- 8,725 District seniors underwent 228,245 hours of psycho-social counseling.

Additionally, we provided meals and support services throughout the year to special populations. For example:

- 199 seniors received services from the Spanish senior center, EOFULA.

- 42 seniors received services through the extended services to the blind and visually-impaired program.
- 37 seniors received services through the hearing-impaired program.
- 248 seniors received services through the Asian/Chinese Cultural Center.
- We produced and edited 12 issues of the “Spotlight on Aging,” a featured newsletter in the Senior Beacon newspaper for the elderly with a readership of over 200,000 and circulation to banks, stores, senior centers, hospitals, and other venues.
- We co-sponsored with Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton the Annual Senior Legislative Day with 300 seniors in attendance.
- We co-sponsored, with the University of the District of Columbia’s Institute of Gerontology and the Department of Mental Health, a

conference on elderly caregivers of the mentally ill at UDC on September 26 with approximately 100 participants.

- We assisted with health fairs, town meetings, and attended various community meetings and citizen outreach initiatives.
- We honored older Americans with a calendar of events (caregivers fair, annual celebration at the armory) in May, nationally recognized as Older Americans Month.
- We sponsored the Ms. Senior DC Pageant and sent Ms. Senior DC, Ms. Daisy Savage to represent the District in the Ms. Senior America Contest.
- We staffed and supported the DC Commission on Aging and all its activities.

Finally in FY 2002, we successfully completed the year-end fiscal closing with no fiscal liabilities.

To date, in Fiscal Year 2003 we are on target in using \$20,786,931 in local and federal operating funds (\$14,746,980.00 local, \$5,759,950.00 federal, and \$280,000.00 intra-District) to continue to provide a wide range of comprehensive services to the District's elders in partnership with the Senior Service Network.

Our services for seniors include adult day care, advocacy, case management, comprehensive assessment, congregate meals, counseling, employment, home-delivered meals, health insurance counseling, health promotion, heavy housecleaning, independent living skills, information and assistance, legal services, outreach, literacy training, long-term care facility, nutrition counseling, nutrition education, ombudsman services for the blind, and the hearing impaired, socialization, special events, transportation, and wellness.

- We have engaged the firm of Lance Bailey and Associates to begin design for the Ward 4 Seniors Wellness Center at 3rd and Kennedy Streets, NW.

- The design work is underway for the Senior Wellness and Multipurpose Center in Ward 6 at the old Hayes School. The architectural firm is Bryant, Bryant and Williams.

The Office on Aging continues to work to meet the challenges that are ahead of us in Fiscal Year 2003 such as:

- Ensuring the development of Senior Wellness Centers in Wards 1 and 2.
- Improving our customer service operation and developing baseline performance measures for all programs.
- We upgraded our internal technology operations and we are now a part of the Office of the Chief Technology Officer's Seat Management Initiative.
- Increasing our outreach efforts to attract seniors to our programs who otherwise would be lonely, isolated and/or hungry.

Because our population continues to grow older, a major challenge is the increasing numbers of seniors who need homecare assistance with activities of daily living.

There remains a great challenge, which we learned from focus groups of caregivers, of effectively communicating to people the existence of services for the elderly and their caregivers and the extent to which the office on aging, a government entity, pays for many of the senior services they receive, such as meals, transportation, and home care.

Let me conclude my statement by assuring you that we expect to end FY 2003 within budget.

We very much appreciate the leadership of Mayor Anthony Williams, the Executive Branch and the support of the council and especially, the Human Services Committee in carrying out the mission of the Office on Aging.

As you know, the Office on Aging takes its responsibility seriously and views its mission as a privilege to fulfill. We continue to be a high touch organization even as we upgrade our technology.

Madame Chairperson, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee today. This concludes my testimony. I am prepared to answer any questions that you and your committee may have and to submit any information that you may need in the future.